

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: FR, IT
SUBJECT: FIRST FRENCH REACTIONS TO MORO KIDNAPPING

1. IN FRANCE MORO KIDNAPPING HAS TRIGGERED VIRTUALLY
UNIVERSAL REVULSION AND INCREASED FEAR FOR ITALY'S
FUTURE STABILITY. QUAI WAS ASKED BY GISCARD TO DRAFT
STRONG AND POINTED STATEMENT OF FRENCH SYMPATHY TO LEONE.

TEXT JUST PUBLISHED BY AFP REFLECTED THE
GREAT EMOTION WITH WHICH FRANCE HAS RECEIVED NEWS OF
MORO'S KIDNAPPING. "IN THIS TRIAL WHICH HAS STRUCK
ITALY AS A WHOLE", GISCARD SAID, "I WANT TO BRING
YOU THIS TESTIMONY OF THE SYMPATHY OF THE FRENCH
PEOPLE AND ITS UNANIMOUS DISAPPROVAL OF THIS ACT OF
TERRORISM AGAINST A STATESMAN OF WHOSE ATTACHMENT
TO LIBERTY AND DEMOCRACY EVERYONE WAS AWARE."

2. VIRTUALLY ALL FRENCH PARTY LEADERS, INCLUDING THE
PCF HAVE ALSO ISSUED AVALANCHE OF STATEMENTS. NOTABLY,
GEORGES MARCHAIS ALMOST INSTANTLY "SEVERELY CONDEMNED
KIDNAPPING", SAYING THAT PCF WAS "OPPOSED TO VIOLENCE
AND TERRORISM". "OUR INDIGNATION OVER THIS CRIME",
HE SAID, "IS TOTAL". CHIRAC ALSO MADE SIMILAR STRONGER
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STATEMENT, CALLING FOR "GREATER SUPPORT FOR FORCES OF
ORDER". CHIRAC FURTHER DECLARED HIMSELF PREOCCUPIED BY
THE "CURRENT TENDENCIES OF INSECURITY AND VIOLENCE
IN ITALY, A CONDITION WHICH INCREASINGLY CHARACTERIZES
THE DEMOCRACIES. "IT IS NECESSARY TO REACT". MORE
CONSIDERATION SHOULD THEREFORE BE GIVEN TO CONSIDERING
MARGINAL ELEMENTS NOT AS VICTIMS OF SOCIETY BUT SOCIETY AS

THEIR VICTIM. HE CONCLUDED ON NOTE THAT IN FRANCE AS WELL THE FIRST RESPONSIBILITY OF THE GOVERNMENT IS TO ASSURE SECURITY. FRANCOIS MITTERRAND FOLLOWED SUITE, CALLING THE KIDNAPPING AN "ACT OF BARBARISM". LEADERS OF CENTRIST PARTIES HAVE ALSO ISSUED STATEMENTS EXPRESSING THEIR DISTRESS.

3. AT QUAI FIRST INSTINCT WAS TO SEE MORO KIDNAPPING AS SPECTACULAR EXTREME LEFT EFFORT TO TRY TO DESTABILIZE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT IN ITS PRESENT DELICATE CONDITION. WHILE TERRORISM HAS RECENTLY BEEN INCREASINGLY T PERSISTANT PROBLEM IN ITALY, THE NEW ELEMENT WHICH MAY NOW BE TEMPTING ITALY'S EXTREME LEFT IS THAT THE PCI NOW SHARES A DEGREE OF THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ORDER.

THUS QUAI THOUGHT MORO'S KIDNAPPING WAS PROBABLY NOT ONLY INTENDED TO PUT IN DOUBT THE DC'S BUT ALSO PCI'S CAPACITY TO GOVERN. APART FROM SUCH INITIAL SPECULATIONS, QUAI HAS NO PRECISE INFORMATION OR ANALYSIS AS YET, APART FROM BEING APPALLED BY THE POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF THIS EVENT. ACCORDING TO OUR LOCAL ITALIAN EMBASSY AND THE PARIS PRESS, THE PERPETRATORS ARE MOST PROBABLY RED GUARDS.

4. COMMENT: FROM THE INTERNAL FRENCH POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE, THE MORO KIDNAPPING, AND THE IMAGE OF RENEWED HIGHEST-LEVEL TERRORISM WHICH IT EVOKES, MAY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MARGINALLY HELP STRENGTHEN THE FRENCH LAW-AND-ORDER VOTE AND CONSEQUENTLY THE MAJORITY IN THE SECOND ROUND. CHIRAC PERCEIVED THIS IMMEDIATELY AS HIS STATEMENT SHOWS. CONVERSELY, THE SPEED AND VIGOR OF MARCHAIS' REACTION PROBABLY HAD THE DOUBLE MOTIVE OF TRYING TO MINIMIZE ANY SUCH IMPACT FOR THE PCF AND OF SUPPORTING AND BEING IN STEP WITH THE PCI IN THIS VERY SERIOUS AFFAIR.

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